The past simple of 'to be'

Introduction

They were at the reception desk 5 minutes ago but they are not there now.

Construction

Affirmative	Negative		Interrogative
	Full form	**Contracted form**	
I was	**I was not**	**I wasn't**	**Was I?**
You were	**You were not**	**You weren't**	**Were you?**
He was	**He was not**	**He wasn't**	**Was he?**
She was	**She was not**	**She wasn't**	**Was she?**
It was	**It was not**	**It wasn't**	**Was it?**
We were	**We were not**	**We weren't**	**Were we?**
They were	**They were not**	**They weren't**	**Were they?**

Short answers

Question:	**'to be' + subject + adjective/noun**	**Was she at work?**
Affirmative answer:	**Yes + subject + 'to be'**	**Yes, she was.**
Negative answer:	**No + subject + 'to be' + not**	**No, she wasn't.**

Note that

We do not use the contracted form for affirmative answers.

Affirmative	Negative
Yes, I was.	No, I wasn't.
Yes, you were.	No, you weren't.
Yes, she was.	No, she wasn't.
Yes, he was.	No, he wasn't.
Yes, it was.	No, it wasn't.
Yes, we were.	No, we weren't.
Yes, they were.	No, they weren't.

Examples

Hans **was** 35 last year so this year he is 36.

There **was** a lot of traffic in London last night

Tom and Mary **were** in Paris last week, they **were not** in London.

Were your visitors Swiss? No they **weren't**, they were French.

We **were** in the Alps for our holiday, it **was** wonderful.